

Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

BROADCAST BY STATIONS OF THE AMERICAN BROADCASTING CO.



How Can We Get and Keep Good Teachers in Our Schools?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, JR.

Speakers

PEARL A. WANAMAKER
ROSE RUSSELL

BENJAMIN FINE
J. EDGAR CHENOWETH

Student Interrogators

TONI D'ESPOSITO

KENNETH NICHOSON

(See also page 16)

COMING

—March 6, 1947—

What Should Be Our Program for Germany
at the Moscow Conference?

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Town Meeting



BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



FEBRUARY 27, 1947

VOL. 12, No. 44

How Can We Get and Keep Good Teachers in Our Schools?

Announcer:

Once again the doors of historic Town Hall in New York City open wide for another lively session of America's Town Meeting of the Air. Each week at this hour Town Hall and the American Broadcasting Company invite you and your friends to join with other patriotic Americans throughout the country in a discussion of a problem of concern to all of you.

Tonight's timely question strikes right at the heart of our educational system—"How Can We Get and Keep Good Teachers in Our Schools?"

Do you know the answer? The safety and future welfare of our children is at stake. Our schools are the bulwark of American democracy.

You will be expected to have an opinion on this question. Your Town Meeting invites you to put aside any personal prejudice you may have and give your mind a

chance to hear both sides. You take part in this Nation's favorite radio forum.

Now we present our moderator, the president of Town Hall, New York, and founder of America's Town Meeting of the Air, Mr. George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. Last year about this time, we discussed the subject, "How Can We Get Better Teachers in Our Schools?" This year our question is, "How Can We Get and Keep Good Teachers in Our Schools?"

If we don't watch out, next year we may have to ask the question, "How can we get anybody to teach?" (*Laughter.*) Thanks to the widespread publicity given this subject, we've got the general idea that our teachers are grossly underpaid, but we, the public, don't seem to be doing much about it.

In Buffalo, New York, one of the most prosperous cities in the richest state in the Union, 2,968 teachers are now on strike—on strike against you and me, the citizens and taxpayers who employ them.

There have been more than a dozen major strikes of school teachers during the past twelve months, and numerous minor strikes. Why? We taxpayers must be pretty careless and indifferent employers to allow this to happen.

At long last, some of us are beginning to realize that we have been gambling with the lives of our own children, as well as the future welfare of the Nation.

So tonight your Town Meeting has invited four experts in this field to tell us what they think we should do to get and keep good teachers in our schools.

Will higher salaries alone do the job? What else is necessary? Where will the salary increases come from?

What are some of the abuses that have driven good teachers out of our schools?

What can we do about it Mrs. Pearl A. Wanamaker, president of the National Education Association?

And Mrs. Rose Russell, what do you, as a former teacher and legislative representative of the teacher's union, think we should do about it?

Dr. Benjamin Fine, you have

just made a nationwide survey on conditions among the teachers. As a Pulitzer prize winner and education editor of the *New York Times*, you should be able to give us some real help on this question.

Congressman J. Edgar Cheno-weth of Colorado, your years of experience as a member of the House Education Committee, makes you qualify as an expert on this question. I'm sure you can help us.

Following your addresses, two high school students, winners of a public-speaking contest conducted by the *New York Herald Tribune* will be your special interrogators. They are Miss Toni D'Esposito of the Prospect Heights High School, Brooklyn, and Mr. Kenneth Nichoson of Manhasset High School, Manhasset, Long Island.

Also, as our very special guests tonight, doing reverse of their customary procedure, we have the famous Quiz Kids, Joel Kupperman, Naomi Cooks, Jack Rooney, and Ronnie Lundy. During the question period, our speakers will have to see if they can answer questions propounded by this celebrated group.

Now, to start our discussion, let us hear from a man who is fresh from the field, having made a widespread survey among teachers of the country, Dr. Benjamin Fine, Pulitzer prize winner and education editor of the *New York Times*. Dr. Fine. (*Applause.*)

Dr. Fine:

Mr. Denny, as you know, I've just returned from Buffalo. The city is gripped in a paralyzing school strike—the greatest educational collapse in the history of the United States.

Seventy-two thousand children stayed at home today, and they stayed at home yesterday, and the day before. They'll stay at home tomorrow, too, and maybe next week, if the strike isn't over.

Nearly 3,000 teachers have left the classroom—some of them have been teachers for 30 or 40 years. They are dignified, sincere, conscientious men and women.

Why are they on strike? What has caused this revolt of the pedagogue?

"I don't want to walk out on my children," a grey-haired Latin teacher, who hadn't missed a day in 35 years of work, said to me "but what can I do? We have tried to get more money and better conditions in Buffalo for the last 12 years, but we have got nothing but promises."

By going out on strike, the Buffalo teachers hope to focus attention on their problem. Basically, it's a question of money. The elementary teacher takes home about \$45 a week, the high school teacher about \$50.

I talked to a high school teacher who had been in the Buffalo system for 24 years. I spent several hours in his home—met his wife

and three children. "After 24 years, I am making \$50 a week," he said in sorrow. "I've studied to be a teacher, I have a degree from the University of Buffalo; another from Columbia University. They tell me I have succeeded in my job. In any other profession, though, I'd be a failure, if, after 24 years, I was making the pay I now get."

"My goodness, it's difficult to get along on what my husband makes," his wife broke in. "We're always broke. I haven't had a new dress in six years. I have to watch every penny."

He showed me his bank book. "Look," he said. He had exactly \$54.21 in the bank. "And this after 24 years," he exclaimed.

"Any other savings." I asked.

"Well," he admitted, "every two weeks, \$1.50 is deducted for war bonds."

This is not an isolated example. The Buffalo teachers, as are teachers of almost every section of the country, are underpaid. That is why they are out on strike.

The walkout is not led by any radical group. The leaders are respectable, hard-working members of the teaching profession. Although the American Federation of Teachers of the C.I.O. Teachers' Union have joined the strike, they are not permitted any active part.

The strike has been called by the Buffalo Teacher Federation, an independent, nonunion organiza-

tion. "Street cleaners, garbage collectors, dog catchers, and truck drivers get more than our beginning teachers," one of the teachers protested. "Isn't our job as important as theirs?"

It may comfort the Buffalo teachers some to know that they are better off than most teachers of the country. The average teacher's salary today is \$37 a week. Several hundred thousand teachers get less than \$25 a week. Some of them even get as little as \$15.

Who can you hire at that salary?

Public school education in this country is in danger of collapse. I have just completed a nationwide survey for the *New York Times* to discover what is happening to our schools and colleges.

I have traveled thousands of miles and passed through half of the States of the Union. What I saw was not pleasant. Many children attend school in buildings not fit for cattle. Often the classrooms are barren and they lack even such fundamental supplies as paper, books, pencils, crayons.

"We have eight spelling books," a fourth grade teacher complained. "How can they be passed around to my 46 children?"

Another said, "If only this room had light, so that we could read when it is cloudy."

Something more than money is involved, however. We must treat our teachers as human beings. At

present, many communities meddle in the lives of their teachers.

It may be difficult to believe, yet teachers frequently are not permitted to be more than second rate citizens.

Very often teachers are not permitted to smoke in public; they must pull down the shades before they light a cigarette. They must not be seen taking a highball, nor is it good taste for them to go to a public dance.

They are told what church to attend, where to spend their evenings.

Intelligent men and women will not go into teaching as long as they feel they are not treated like the rest of society. They don't want their freedom restricted. While teachers should typify the highest moral standards, they should not be expected to do more than is expected of the other members of the community, particularly parents themselves.

We must change our attitude towards teachers if we expect to get the intelligent members of the community to enter the teaching profession. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Dr. Fine. Now, here's Mrs. Rose Russell, a former teacher and legislative representative of the Teachers' Union, C. I.O. who has some precise ideas about what should be done about this situation in order to get and

keep good teachers in our schools.
Mrs. Russell. (*Applause.*)

Mrs. Russell:

I want to back up what Mr. Fine has just said except that I really must point out that union teachers are just as professional-minded and respectable as their nonunion colleagues. (*Applause.*) The main difference seems to be that we knew in advance that you can't separate the professional from the economic problems of the teachers, unless you believe, as I used to when I was a child, that teachers don't have to eat—that somehow they aren't people. Maybe if teachers themselves had recognized this earlier, we might have won decent salaries in time to prevent explosions like the strikes that are popping up all over the country.

As Mr. Fine found in his cross-country trip, teachers have been pushed around, browbeaten, and humiliated for years. If they dared to ask for higher pay, to complain about their grievances, they were punished or threatened with reprisal.

If they made suggestions or criticisms, organized or joined a teachers' union, took part in local politics, or even expressed an opinion, if they just tried to speak and act like other people, they were branded unprofessional and often fired.

I don't say that this unhealthy condition has been cured; far from

it. There is still a premium on timidity and weakness, but as true as I'm standing here, something new has entered the schoolhouse.

We in the C.I.O. propose a national minimum of \$2,500, with ten increments of \$250, to bring teachers' pay up to \$5,000 after ten years. Wherever possible, this basic minimum should be even higher.

How shall we finance these increases? Any high school freshman knows that local communities can't support their schools out of their own resources alone. State legislatures must help their towns and cities and villages, not by giving them added taxing powers, but by giving them more money. (*Applause.*) Then, besides, the Federal Congress must help the states.

I remember a year or so ago, Congressman Chenoweth, when I testified before the House Committee on Education in favor of the bill for federal aid to public schools, you fired lots of questions at me. We seemed to disagree quite sharply, as I recall, on whether federal aid was needed.

If so, who should get it. And whether Federal funds wouldn't bring about Federal control over local school systems.

On that last point I maintain now, as I did then, that control need not follow the dollar, especially since the bill provides plenty of safeguards against it.

At this moment, it is critically necessary for the Federal Government to help out, if not all, at least the neediest states — those like Mississippi and Arkansas — that seem to have the least money and the most children.

Has the Federal Government any responsibility for education? Well, so long as you can't quarantine ignorance and keep it from crossing state lines, the Federal Government has to help wipe it out, while the richer states must help share the cost. (*Applause.*)

Meanwhile, the hottest fight is going on within the states, for salary increases that will help us get and keep good teachers. Isn't it curious that state legislatures are still trying to figure out how little they can give and how long they can put off giving it?

California recently granted a \$2,400 minimum. That was good. Of course, you know that's worth only about \$1,200 in prewar purchasing power.

But New York, this richest state in the union, is offering a disgraceful \$2,000 minimum and throwing the main burden of additional increases on the locality.

Is it any wonder that after a runaround of months and years the Buffalo teachers are on strike, while in New York City and elsewhere throughout the state teachers are, to put it mildly, restless?

Incidentally from the first glimpse we've had this evening of

the new schedules proposed by our administration my guess is that New York teachers will be in an uproar.

The new proposals won't give us new teachers nor satisfied present ones.

Consider the 350,000 teachers who have abandoned their classrooms since the war. Just imagine the howl of rage and revolution that would go up on all sides if those 350,000 teachers had thought that they could save their professional lives and livelihood and keep the Nation's schools from collapsing by quietly leaving their classrooms, not forever, not separately, but together and just for a day.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that they should or could have done this. Only who can say that it might not have been better for the children in the long run if they had?

Today teachers everywhere are putting up a heroic fight for higher pay and more funds for education from local, state, and federal government because we have learned that we have to fight for every penny we get.

Teachers have given their answer to the veteran who recently brought his former instructor an apple and said, "There's a worm in there and it's turning. How about you?" (*Laughter and applause.*)

They are answering in Buffalo. Their answer came from Norwalk, Connecticut; Shamokin, and St. Paul. I believe that only those self-righteous people who are most responsible for starving the schools and cheating the children are pained and alarmed by this new spirit among the teachers. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Mrs. Russell. Now I expect we're going to hear some difference of opinion from the Republican Congressman from Colorado who for five years was a member of the House Education Committee. Congressman J. Edgar Chenoweth. (*Applause.*)

Congressman Chenoweth:

Mrs. Russell, I recall very well that you appeared before our House Committee on education and was a very persuasive witness. I agree with part of the program which you are now suggesting, but I cannot go with you all the way.

I start on the premise that our teachers have been underpaid over the years and we are now confronted with the problem of adjusting salaries.

You propose a minimum salary of \$2,500 for a teacher with four years of college training. I believe the N.E.A. has set this figure at \$2,400. I am also in favor of some minimum salary, the amount of which will probably vary in the different sections of the country.

You propose a graduated scale of teacher salaries. I am not so sure that I would go along with that proposal. I do not want to see the teachers of this Nation put in a straight jacket. After giving a teacher a minimum salary to start with, I feel that future compensation should be based on the capacity and aptitude of the teacher as well as seniority.

I have always looked upon teachers as belonging to a professional group and we do not ordinarily fix salary schedules for lawyers, doctors, dentists, or other professional classes.

Since we are agreed that teacher's salaries must be raised, we now come to a most important question—one that one of my colleagues in Congress always raises when we consider an appropriation bill. That is: where are you going to get the money?

You are suggesting both state and federal aid to education. I am wholeheartedly for state aid to education. The education and training of our children has always been a responsibility of the different states, towns, cities, and local communities.

It is true that some states have been a little slow to recognize their obligations to their teachers. However, I feel that an aroused public sentiment is now bringing about the changes that are needed.

I know this is true in my own State of Colorado. Even though

we rank in the first ten states in expenditures per pupil and have excellent teachers, we are not satisfied. Mass meetings have been held in several parts of the state. These have been attended by members of our state legislature and others interested in good schools.

Our state legislature is now considering a state aid bill that would provide for an additional expenditure of about eight million dollars additional for each year for our schools.

Legislatures all over the country are now meeting in 35 of our states and you will find educational bills on the calendar of each. We are getting action at the state level.

We can save money, can provide greater efficiency in our schools by reorganizing our present systems.

I sat as a member of the House Committee on Education and heard the testimonies both for and against federal aid. I have come to certain conclusions and one is that it is not possible to have federal aid without some degree of federal control.

All teachers with whom I have talked are opposed to any semblance of federal control or interference with our public schools. I recall that N.E.A. officials, in appearing before our committee in support of federal aid, admitted that there would have to be some cooperation between the Federal Government and the state departments of education.

I believe one witness referred to it as a partnership. Now we all know that partners have equal voices in operating a business and I don't believe that the teachers of our country want someone in Washington telling them what to teach, when to teach, and how to teach.

The trend is certainly away from centralized authority in Washington in every field. If the elections last November meant anything, they surely indicated that the people of this country want less government from Washington.

We are now struggling with the federal budget in Congress and are trying to reduce expenditures by six billion dollars. This must be done if tax relief is to be provided.

I know that teachers as well as other groups are interested in the reduction of their high wartime income tax rates.

The Federal Government now has a national debt of around 258 billion dollars, and I believe all our states have substantial balances on hand.

We cannot reduce taxes, balance the budget, and make payments on our national debt if we are to assume new financial obligations that heretofore have been the responsibilities of the states.

I was interested in what Mrs. Russell had to say about the right of teachers to strike. Teachers have been held by the Supreme Court of one of our great states

to stand *in loco parentis*, which is a legal phrase meaning "in place of the parents." We cannot conceive of a parent walking out on their own children.

Teachers are public servants and I believe that they have weakened their cause by these strikes. Teachers should recognize the validity of a contract and carry out any agreement that they make.

Our teachers are entitled to more money and I want to see them get it. It was natural that during the war they would be attracted by the high and abnormal wartime wages being paid in our defense industries.

We are now in the period of readjustment and I fully realize that it is a most difficult time for teachers and other groups. However, it is not all a matter of dollars and cents. The great majority of our teachers are devoted to their profession and take great pride in the contribution they are making to society.

Success in life, Dr. Fine, is not always measured by bank books, and I am sure that you agree that teachers have always set an example for their pupils and others to follow. I pray this will always be true. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Congressman Chenoweth. Now there is some difference of opinion and here's Dr. Pearl A. Wanamaker, as our next speaker, who is going to evaluate

what these speakers have said, and let us have some of her own opinions on these topics on which there is difference of opinion.

Dr. Wanamaker, your record of public service to your native State of Washington began in a one-room rural school and has taken you up through a variety of offices to that of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Now you hold the highest office in the largest education association in the country—the president of the National Education Association.

I take pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, in presenting Dr. Pearl A. Wanamaker. Dr. Wanamaker. (*Applause.*)

Dr. Wanamaker:

What Mr. Fine and Mrs. Russell have said about the status of the teacher reminds me of a description I recently received from a teacher in my own state:

"She must be a creature with the face of Aphrodite or Greer Garson; the chassis of Betty Grable or Venus de Milo, both arms intact; the disposition of any one of the Saints; the chastity of the Virgin Mother; the pioneering spirit of a missionary; and last, by no means least, the energy of an atom bomb, harnessed, not explosive; and she must definitely be young and pretty." (*Laughter.*)

Each one of the previous speakers has mentioned teachers' salaries. I'd like to add my bit. The pro-

fession has been underpaid for so long that many people believe teachers, like Cassius, must have a lean and hungry look. (*Laughter.*)

But the time is here when the salaries offered teachers must be consistent with the importance of the work done by the profession of education. The National Education Association has advocated a minimum of \$2,400 for a four-year college graduate, with a salary schedule over a period of ten years, bringing it up to \$5,000 or \$6,000 for a teacher of exceptional ability and long experience.

There is no other way to guarantee the high quality and stability of service which schools in a democracy require. American citizens are entitled to find in their schools the same high degree of skill which they find in their surgeons' offices.

In my own State of Washington, we have felt that we've done a pretty fair job in raising teachers' salaries in the last five years. It was a genuine shock to realize that the teacher today is getting less in buying power than in 1940.

In 1940, we paid an average salary of \$1,700. Today, we pay an average salary of \$2,500, which in 1940 dollars, is only about \$1,250 if measured in purchasing power.

This important step of raising salaries will not be taken because of the efforts of the teachers alone. The question is being squarely put

to the group that must, in the final analysis, produce the answer. That group is composed of the citizens—the voting public in every city and town in America.

The American people must take vigorous and immediate steps to meet the present crisis and to build for the future.

The National Education Association has advocated a program of action. They have stimulated, first in the local community, action to have an appraisal of the financial program, the kind of school facilities, and materials used in the schools, so that each community will do its utmost to provide assistance in this program of education. Second, for the state legislatures to act. In most states, this question is before the state legislatures, and every state legislature must take immediate action and do some long-range planning.

My own state legislature, for instance, is considering legislation which, if enacted, will provide a \$2,400 minimum and approximately around a \$3,500 average salary.

The Tennessee Legislature, as you know, working with the Tennessee Education Association, doubled its funds last month.

Then, third, the Congressman notwithstanding, the Congress of the United States must act. The 80th Congress cannot ignore the needs of so fundamental an American institution as the public

schools. They'll just have to find the money. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Chenoweth, while opposed to federal aid for education, will agree, I am certain, to the fact that wealth in the United States is not evenly distributed. The people of the richest state have five times as much income per child as the people of the poorest state—California, for instance, with \$9,000, Mississippi with \$1,900.

Some communities spend sixty times as much for the education of their children as others do.

Now I would like to just ad lib a little bit here and say that after all, we're not afraid of federal control if we write it into the policy of the Congress that there shall be no federal control. Originally the states got grants of land from Congress and there has been no federal control where that was given to the states and the state then assumed the responsibility. That can be done again.

The only time we need to fear federal control is when we have such programs as we have had with the NYA, with the Lanham Act with the school lunches, where there is not a definite federal policy enunciated by the Congress.

There is now a bi-partisan bill—Senate 472—before the United States Senate, authorizing the federal funds up to a quarter of a billion dollars a year to assist public schools in the neediest states,

and the Federal Congress must recognize its responsibility.

Three ways we can do this job—locally, by state, and by the Federal Government. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Dr. Wanamaker. Now it's time for questions from our special interrogators, the winners of the second annual *New York Herald Tribune* High School Forum, which is to be held on March 8. We'll start with this lovely young lady over here, Miss Toni D'Esposito, of Prospect Heights High School in Brooklyn. Toni, may we hear from you, please. (*Applause.*)

Miss D'Esposito: Congressman Chenoweth, I gather from your speech that you feel that the teachers do not have the right to strike against the Federal Government, and that they would not be living up to their responsibilities as teachers if they went out on strike. I feel that the business of seeing that children are properly taught is equally the responsibility of the Board of Education, the governor, and the legislature.

If they do not meet with the teachers to discuss their problems and take steps to prevent such crises, are they not equally responsible for the strike situation?

Congressman Chenoweth, don't you think that teachers should be granted the privilege, given to

every American worker, of collective bargaining? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Congressman, that's a double-barreled question for you.

Congressman Chenoweth: I would hesitate to place school teachers in the same class with the trade unions. I recognize them as a professional group. Now, it is true that a worker has the right to strike, and I would not deny him the right to strike. I don't think that Congress is going to pass any legislation which will deny the worker the right to strike. (*Applause.*) But I think that a school teacher occupies a very fiduciary relationship with that child. And I doubt if you could establish a system of collective bargaining in the school systems of our country which would work out a very satisfactory solution to this problem.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, sir. Now, Toni, another question?

Miss D'Esposito: I have a question for Mrs. Rose Russell. There is legislation proposed in many states that deny teachers the right to strike, and if teachers absent themselves from the job, they will either be dismissed or their salary reduced to the lowest rank. What is the attitude of your union towards such legislation?

Mrs. Russell: There is as a matter of fact at this moment concretely such a bill in the New York State Legislature that was introduced on February 12, Lincoln's

Birthday, the great day of emancipation, when New York teachers went to Albany to put their case before the Governor. We consider such legislation absolutely indefensible, that it denies their rights as citizens—not that teachers want to strike, but simply that it denies us rights as citizens.

Moreover, we consider that it is absolutely unenforceable, in a way unenforceable just the opposite of prohibition. You couldn't enforce prohibition because you couldn't make people stop drinking. Well, it isn't that you can't make teachers stop striking—they don't want to strike—but if you tried to impose the penalty on teachers that this bill does, you will lose all your teachers and where are you going to replace them? Consequently, the bill is sheer nonsense as well as vicious and dangerous. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mrs. Russell. Now let's hear from our second contest winner, Kenneth Nichoson of Manhasset, Long Island, High School.

Mr. Nichoson: Well, Mr. Fine, I am in 100 percent agreement with you as to your dislike of the attitude of certain communities in the United States towards their teachers. However, such morality of a community cannot be revised or corrected over night. Therefore, how do you propose to change such an attitude of a community. Do you think that the

answer lies in a firm standardized tenure?

Mr. Fine: To answer the latter part of your question, I certainly feel that all teachers should be on good tenure laws. They should have the protection of tenure and retirement laws. As far as the provisions in many communities that teachers are second-class citizens, by that they can't smoke, they can't take a cocktail if they want to, or they can't be seen at a night-club, I think that it is up to the community to take a different attitude towards the teachers—to consider the teachers as part of their family, part of the community, rather than as a race apart.

Mr. Denny: Ben, you're going to have those teachers smoking and drinking yet.

Mr. Fine: If the parents can, why can't the teachers?

Mr. Denny: That's a good point.

Mr. Fine: You see, I don't do either.

Mr. Denny: All right, Kenneth, do you have another question?

Mr. Nichoson: I think he's trying to evade my issue, I appreciate that the attitude of the community must be changed, but how do you propose to do it?

Mr. Denny: Ah, there's one for the education editor of the *Times*.

Mr. Fine: No wonder you won the prize! (*Laughter and Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: You should say:

No wonder he won the *Herald Tribune* prize. (*Laughter.*)

Mr. Fine: Well, it's a very good question and not an easy one. I would answer it by asking another question. How are we going to change the public attitude towards the teachers' salary question? How are we going to change the public attitude towards the question of getting and keeping better teachers—exactly what we are discussing?

But not to evade your issue, I think that the way we can get better teachers is to have the community itself appreciate what the teachers are doing, by doing exactly what we are doing now, by doing what the newspapers are trying to do of late, that is, to show you, the public, and we, all of us, what is happening today to the teachers. Make the country aware of the fact that if we want our democracy to succeed and to flourish, we will have to have a good teaching staff.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. Fine. Now, Kenneth one more question.

Mr. Nichoson: Congressman Chenoweth, I thoroughly back Mrs. Russell's viewpoint that we do need national aid and I feel that we can get it without national control. However, you firmly stand that we cannot get it without national control and that national control is not desirable. I wish you would elaborate on your reasons why you feel that

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

PEARL ANDERSON WANAMAKER—Mrs. Wanamaker, who is the 1946-47 president of the National Education Association, is also serving her sixth year as Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Born at Mabana on Camano Island, Washington, Mrs. Wanamaker attended public school, Bellingham Normal School, and the University of Washington, from which she was graduated.

Her teaching career began in a one-room rural school. She also taught and served as principal in elementary schools and taught in high school. In 1923, she was elected Superintendent of Schools in Island Country, Washington.

In 1927, she married Lemuel A. Wanamaker, a civil engineer. The Wanamakers have three children. Mrs. Wanamaker has served three terms in the State House of Representatives. She also was a member of the State Senate. During her terms in the Legislature, Mrs. Wanamaker authored and sponsored several important bills in the behalf of the state's schools.

Since Mrs. Wanamaker became State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1940, teachers' salaries have increased 47 per cent in Washington.

Mrs. Wanamaker is a member of many educational groups. She was a member of the Education Mission to Japan, appointed by the State Department at the request of General MacArthur. Twenty-seven of the Nation's leading educators spent March, 1946, in Japan studying the educational system. Recommendations for the democratization of education in Japan were made to General MacArthur.

Mrs. Wanamaker also served as an advisor to the United States delegation to UNESCO at its first conference held in Paris in November, 1946.

BENJAMIN FINE—Education Editor of the *New York Times*, Mr. Fine has just completed a survey of conditions in public schools throughout the country.

Born in New York City, Mr. Fine has degrees from Rhode Island State College, Columbia University School of Journalism, Columbia, and Bryant College. He has been an assistant in the Pulitzer School of Journalism, a reporter on the *New York Post*, and an assistant in public relations at Teachers College, of Columbia University. From 1937 to 1941 he was education reporter for the *New York Times*, and since 1941 has been education editor.

He has conducted various surveys in the field of education. In 1943, he won a Pulitzer award for a series of articles on the teaching of American history in the schools and colleges of the United States.

In addition to his newspaper writing, Mr. Fine is the author of several books and many articles in professional and educational journals.

Mr. Fine is the father of three children.

MRS. ROSE RUSSELL—Mrs. Russell, the mother of one child, taught French and English in the New York City high schools for 17 years. Three years ago, she resigned and is now legislative representative of the Teachers Union, C.I.O.

Mrs. Russell, who was born in New York City, is a graduate of the University of Michigan. She also studied in France. In 1946, she was a delegate to the first postwar international conference of teachers organizations, both union and nonunion, held in Paris, under the auspices of the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Among the committees and boards to which Mrs. Russell belongs are the Executive Board of the Teachers Salary Conference, the Citizens Committee of Children of New York City, Inc., the Recreation Committee of the Welfare Council of New York, and the Advisory Board of the New York Youth Council.

J. EDGAR CHENOWETH—Congressman from Colorado, lives in Trinidad, Colorado. He received his education in the public schools of Trinidad. He also attended the University of Colorado.

Congressman Chenoweth studied law in his spare time and began the practice of law in Trinidad in 1926. He served as Assistant District Attorney and County Judge before being elected to Congress in 1940, where he is now serving his fourth term. He is a member of the Rules Committee and also the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments. He was a member of the House Committee on Education for six years.

Congressman Chenoweth is a Republican and served as State Chairman of the Republican Party in Colorado prior to his election to Congress. He is married and the father of five children.

TONI D'ESPOSITO—Miss D'Esposito is a student at Prospect Heights High School, Brooklyn. She is one of the winners of the public-speaking contest held in preparation for the second annual *New York Herald Tribune* High School Forum which will be held on March 8, 1947.

KENNETH NICHOSON—Mr. Nicholson is a student at Manhasset, Long Island, High School. He, also, is a winner of the *New York Herald Tribune* public-speaking contest and will take part in the second annual High School Forum to be conducted by that newspaper.

this is impossible—why we cannot get national aid without national control?

Congressman Chenoweth: Well, Kenneth, I'm glad to have some optimists here in New York who feel that you can take federal money without having federal control. Those of us who have been in Washington any length of time know that that cannot be done.

Congress writes a bill and, immediately, those who administer that bill completely ignore the intent and purpose of the bill and carry out what they have in mind rather than what Congress writes into the bill.

Now, Mrs. Wanamaker feels that you can have federal money without control, but you certainly have to be a confirmed optimist to believe that. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Well, there seems to be a matter of difference of opinion. I want to thank particularly, the two winners of this contest, the *Herald Tribune* contest, Kenneth Nicholson and Toni D'Esposito.

Now, I see those Quiz Kids over there are very anxious to get into this discussion and 1,500 people in this Town Hall are anxious to get in this discussion, but I am sure that you listeners will be interested in the following message.

Announcer. You are listening to America's Town Meeting of the Air, brought to you by Town Hall and the American Broadcasting

Company, originating tonight in Town Hall, New York, and conducted by George V. Denny, Jr., president of Town Hall. You have heard Mrs. Pearl A. Wanamaker, Benjamin Fine, Mrs. Rose Russell, and Representative J. Edgar Chenoweth discussing the question, "How Can We Get and Keep Good Teachers in Our Schools?"

For your convenience, we print each week the Town Meeting Bulletin containing a complete transcript of tonight's discussion including the questions and answers to follow.

You may secure tonight's Town Meeting Bulletin by writing to Town Hall, New York 18, New York, enclosing 10 cents to cover the cost of printing and mailing.

If you would like to have this bulletin in a handy pocket size come to you regularly each week, enclose \$1 for eleven weeks or \$2.35 for six months or \$4.50 for a year. Remember the address—Town Hall, New York 18, New York, and allow at least two weeks for delivery.

Each week we hear of new groups being organized to listen to and discuss our Town Meeting programs immediately following these meetings. Have you organized a Town Meeting in your home, school, church, or club? It's fun, and it's good citizenship. It's the American way of increasing your understanding of the problems that vitally concern your welfare.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Denny: To start our question period tonight, we have four very special guests, the famous Quiz Kids, who are particularly interested in tonight's discussion, as they are conducting a contest to find the best teacher of 1947.

They are asking school children all over the country to write a letter on the subject, "The Teacher Who Has Helped Me Most," and in this case, the teacher wins a prize of \$2,500 to be used for advanced study. The next three best teachers each receive \$500 in cash, and there is \$1,650 in prizes for school children writing the best letters.

This seems to be one way, kids, to get and keep good teachers in our schools. Now Joel Kupperman, Naomi Cooks, Jack Rooney, and Ronnie Lundy, we'll take your questions for our speakers first, and then we'll let this big Town Hall audience in on the discussion.

I see Joel has his hand up. Joel, let's have your question.

Joel: Before I ask my question, I want to comment that part of Mrs. Russell's 350 teachers, I think it was—or was it—

Mr. Denny: 350,000.

Joel: A part of them probably had wanted their pension and decided that there was no reason why you should keep on working, again.

Mr. Denny: Oh, they had just

retired? Well, would you like to ask Mrs. Russell to comment on that?

Joel: Okay, do you want to comment on it? (*Laughter.*)

Mrs. Russell: As a matter of fact, the figure of 350,000 is over and above the normal number that we expect to leave by retirement, resignation, or death, in any given year or period of time.

Mr. Denny: You see, Joel, she's not going to let you puncture her statistics. Now, go ahead and ask your other question that you had in mind.

Joel: All right. I just want to say, it doesn't have to be the same old routine in anything. They might have got an unusual number of pensions.

Mr. Denny: Well, all right. You're sort of participating in this debate, and that's all right, too. But, let's see, there's Naomi with a question now.

Joel: Well, could I give my question now? (*Laughter.*)

Mr. Denny: Go right ahead.

Joel: Mrs. Russell, don't you think to be a good teacher you have to be a part mother, a part psychologist, a part educational authority, a part big-wig, and a lot of other things mixed in?

Mrs. Russell: Well, that's a very big order, and in a way I do agree you do have to be pretty much all of those things, and our

community should pay people for those qualities. (*Laughter and applause.*)

Mr. Denny: All right, we see that both Ronnie and Naomi Cooks have their hands up. Naomi, let's have your question.

Naomi: Mrs. Russell, in spite of what Mr. Chenoweth said, don't you think that the teachers should be paid by the Federal Government, rather than the local government? (*Laughter.*)

Mrs. Russell: I knew I was going to be heckled this evening. (*Laughter.*) Well, no, I don't think the teachers should be paid by the Federal Government. But, I do disagree with Mr. Chenoweth about the uses to which federal money can be put, and if I may take advantage of this question to explain that for more than a century, Federal Government has been appropriating money for land-grant colleges and for a long, long time for vocational education, and in no case has there been any problem of federal control. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Now, Ronnie, who is your question for?

Ronnie: Mr. Fine.

Mr. Denny: All right, Mr. Fine, will you step right up and take a question from Ronnie Lundy?

Ronnie: In our "best teacher" contest on the Quiz Kids last year the winning teacher, Mrs. Binker, had a salary of \$17,200—

Mr. Denny: \$17,000? \$1,700 you mean.

Ronnie: Yes. And, don't you think it would be best—

Mr. Denny: You've got to be careful with those ciphers, Ronnie. All right, go ahead.

Ronnie: Well, don't you think the best teacher in the United States should be paid more than that?

Mr. Fine: Yes, I certainly do, but I think it's a disgrace that we pay our teachers \$1,700 a year, or as my survey shows the classroom teachers in this country gets an average of \$37 a week. Today, in actual money, not in terms of what he is worth, but in dollars and cents, the average teacher takes home \$37 a week—the classroom teacher—and I certainly think that the good teachers should get far more than that. I would say that a good teacher ought to get \$60, \$70 or even \$80 a week. That wouldn't be too much. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: I thank you. Now Jack Rooney.

Jack: Well, I have two questions. My first will be for the Representative of Colorado.

Mr. Denny: Congressman Chenoweth. All right. Where are you from, Jack?

Jack: I'm from Chicago.

Mr. Denny: Which high school?

Jack: Loyola Academy on the North Side.

Mr. Denny: All right, sir. I

should have asked all of you where you came from.

Jack: Don't you think that unions are necessary for all employees?

Congressman Chenoweth: All employees, including teachers, you mean, Jack?

Jack: Including teachers and any others.

Congressman Chenoweth: No, I do not think so, for teachers, Jack. I think that teachers are a professional group and I've never been able to convince myself that the unions are necessary for teachers. It's something new that's come up in the last few years. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Jack, do you want to ask him another one?

Jack: Yes, on the same line. But, this is one of the few professions that is employed. Lawyers and doctors are their own bosses. (*Applause.*)

Congressman Chenoweth: You'll find that many lawyers are employed—and perhaps a good many lawyers are also unemployed these days. I just want to make one observation, if I may, Mr. Moderator? Joel must have been in Washington recently when he confused \$1,700 with \$17,000. That's a common practice in Washington. (*Laughter.*)

Mr. Denny: But that wasn't Joel, that was Ronnie. Now, kids, I'm coming back to you during the discussion.

In the meantime, I want to go

out to the audience and take some questions from the audience. The gentleman right back there in the middle of the house.

Man: My question is addressed to the gentleman from Colorado. As long as we have him here, I'd like to have him tell the teachers what he uses other than a bank book to pay his doctor bills and his grocery bills. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: That's in the nature of a personal question, but I suppose the Congressman would like to comment.

Congressman Chenoweth: I'll answer the gentleman. I'm not going to let him put words in my mouth, however, and put me in the position that I'm opposed to increases in teachers' salaries, because I stated very emphatically that I am in favor of increasing teachers' salaries. I made this observation—that success is not altogether measured in terms of money.

I think it was Steinmetz who once said, "The secret of success in life is to be doing the thing you like to do every day, and do it better today than you did it yesterday," I think school teachers are doing that pretty generally.

Man: My question is addressed to Mrs. Wanamaker. Can't sufficient savings in the budget be made to increase teachers' salaries if the curriculum is returned to the basic subjects, mainly the "Three R's"?

Mrs. Wanamaker: Well, that's a

pretty big question, but I don't think anybody wants the curriculum back to the "Three R's" in the modern age. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, the gentleman on the front row.

Man: Mrs. Russell, for a stable economy, do you believe in a premium to producers before non-producers share in the rewards of production?

Mr. Denny: Do you get that, Mrs. Russell?

Mrs. Russell: No.

Mr. Denny: Would you explain a little more clearly what you mean by your question, sir?

Man: By this question, I mean this: The economy of a nation depends upon its production. Without production, there can be no pay envelope at all. Consequently, my question to Mrs. Russell is simply this: For a stable economy, do you believe in a premium to be given to producers? That is, shall they get more money to produce more, as a premium. For instance, if they put out 2,000 tons of steel, instead of 1,000, they get so much more for that steel.

Mr. Denny: Well, that's a very good question, if we were discussing economics. But I'm afraid we're not discussing economics tonight. Thank you, very much. We'll take a question from the gentleman in the balcony, there.

Man: I'm addressing Mrs. Russell. I'm a teacher in the New York City System — proud but

poor. (*Laughter.*) Since strikes antagonize the public, the press, Boards of Education, and legislators, alike, and since our own professional organizations, for a long while, like the 70 odd organizations in our joint committee of teacher organizations in New York City, have been most successful in dealing with these groups, why should the C.I.O. advocate teachers' strikes? (*Applause.*)

Mrs. Russell: I think I should make our position clear. We do not advocate strikes. (*Applause.*) This is not a theoretical question. The question that has come before us is whether, in view of the fact that there are strikes, for example, the Buffalo teachers, whether we shall condemn them or condemn those who are responsible for the conditions that have given rise to them.

Teachers do not naturally, normally, or in the ordinary course, resort to strikes. As a matter of fact, neither do other workers, but teachers even more than other workers.

The point is that when a situation has been reached where the teachers find that they have no other recourse, then some times they have to do it. I'd like to point out that about a week ago the teachers of Hawthorne, New Jersey, did it for one day, and the result was that they got their demands. The teachers do it because it works after they've given up—

after they've tried everything else.
(*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman in the balcony.

Man: I address my question to Mrs. Wanamaker. In line with the problem of local taxation, and keeping in mind the local control of education, what portion of the cost of our schools should be borne by the state?

Mrs. Wanamaker: Well, now, that will vary in different states. For instance, in our own state, about 65 per cent of the cost of education is borne by the state, and 35 per cent by the local government, and we believe that it should be around a 40-60 ratio to be good.

Lady: I don't know exactly whom to address. Wouldn't a more professional type of organization among teachers instead of the multiplicity of organizations that we have had help them raise their professional standing in the community and get the backing to rid them of fear?

Mr. Denny: All right, would you like to take that on Mrs. Wanamaker? Good.

Mrs. Wanamaker: Yes, I think I should take that on as the president of the greatest professional organization of teachers. This organization, we feel, is the professional organization and serves the greatest number of teachers in the United States. We believe that the problem can be worked out in the professional way by working

together with our local communities, with our state legislatures, and with our Congress, and eventually get—and I don't mean eventually a long time away, but right now—get the results that are being obtained in every section of these United States in these local communities, in the state legislatures at the present time, and in the bill before the Congress. If we, as a united profession, will back that program, then we will have success.

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mrs. Wanamaker, but you've got Mrs. Russell on her feet now.

Mrs. Russell: I want to answer the same question. I don't feel that there is any such sharp distinction. We as a teachers' union are also a professional organization, and our many activities attest to that. We have a great many professional activities. May I say that the present form of organization, which prevails too much throughout the whole country, has not been effective in raising teachers to the level of first-class citizenship, and ridding them of the fear and intimidation that prevails throughout the land. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: All right, here's Mrs. Wanamaker back.

Mrs. Wanamaker: May I say this, that your professional organization is the only organization that has actually brought any results whatever in these United States. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. I'm afraid we haven't time for that other question. The time has just flown. The Quiz Kids have questions, you all have questions, but our speakers are going to prepare their summaries for tonight's question, but first here is a message of interest to you.

Announcer: On Thursday, March 20, a Town Meeting of special interest to our audience tonight will originate in the Department of Interior Auditorium in Washington, D. C. It will be a special Junior Town Meeting in which four high school students and two adults will participate.

Our question will be: "Should Our Public Schools Educate for Marriage and Family Relations?" The eight finalists have been selected to go to Washington for this broadcast, and they are Don Hayes, Benson Polytechnic High School, Portland, Oregon; Ann Farrell, William Howard Taft High School, Chicago, Illinois; Joan Martin, Carrick High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Eulalia Harrison, Central High School, Washington, D.C.; Carolyn Arden, High Point High School, High Point, North Carolina; Bill Elliott, College High High School, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Vivian Max, Walnut Hills High School, Cincinnati, Ohio; and Frederick Nagelstad, Central High School, Sioux City, Iowa.

Mr. Denny: Now here is Dr. Pearl A. Wanamaker.

Mrs. Wanamaker: These two points, salaries in keeping with the importance of the teaching job and the acceptance of teachers as responsible and respectable citizens, are the most important single problems which must be solved before we can hope to have enough teachers.

Efforts to attract the kind of young people needed in teaching will never get to first base unless positive action is taken. It is up to the people to accept the challenge.

The profession of education has never faltered in its efforts, and it won't give up now. We ask the backing of every citizen.

Congressman Chenoweth: Our teacher's problem is being courageously and adequately met. Liberal retirement systems and pensions are being granted, salaries are being raised. Colorado, Washington, California, and many other states are leading the way. I have no doubt that the teaching profession is going to be made attractive enough to have our young people enrolling in teachers colleges in the usual numbers. I have no fear that we can get and keep good teachers and will do so.

Mrs. Russell: I believe that school can be fun for children—a place where they can develop healthy bodies and eager, alert minds tuned in to this atomic age.

I believe that teaching can be a satisfying and rewarding profession. You people out there can help to make it so.

You who want good schools and good teachers for your children and for all children, you who know that without public education our liberties cannot endure, and all progress is doomed, you must support our fight.

You must help to get and keep good teachers by raising salaries, now, improving school conditions, restoring the teachers' self-respect, and freeing them from insecurity, indignity, and fear. This is what we teachers are fighting for. If you help, we can win together. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Fine: Mr. Denny, after listening to the other three speakers and to the members of the audience, we can recognize that American education faces a serious breakdown. Our schools have long been the main bulwark of our democratic way of life. If we allow them to deteriorate, we are endangering the American form of government.

It is essential that our children get a good education. They cannot get it as long as our best students will not enter the teaching profession. They cannot get it as long

as one out of seven teachers in the country today holds an emergency substandard license.

The Nation's school stand is the most important means of preserving and extending our democratic way of life. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, and our special thanks to the Quiz Kids, to Kenneth Nicholason, Toni D'Esposito, and this splendid Town Hall audience for a most interesting meeting.

Now next week all eyes will be turned toward Moscow where General Marshall and the Council of Foreign Ministers will meet to try to decide a most momentous question growing out of the last war—What to do with Germany and Austria? Our subject will be, "What Should be Our Program for Germany at the Moscow Conference?"

Our speakers will be Miss Dorothy Thompson, author and syndicated columnist; Senator Harry P. Cain, Republican of Washington state; Edgar Ansel Mowrer, author and foreign correspondent; and Wallace R. Duell, foreign correspondent and former special assistant to Ambassador Robert Murphy in Germany. (*Applause.*)